



## INTERNATIONAL INSTITUTE OF MODERN LETTERS

*Te Pūtahi Tuhi Auaha o te Ao*

### Newsletter – 25 November 2008

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This is the 134<sup>th</sup> in a series of occasional newsletters from the Victoria University centre of the International Institute of Modern Letters. For more information about any of the items, please email [modernletters@vuw.ac.nz](mailto:modernletters@vuw.ac.nz).

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#### 1. Awards season 08

It’s been a good couple of weeks for IIML graduates and associates, leading to our first item’s extended coverage of the literary awards season, currently in full swing:

##### a. Good science

2007 Victoria University Writer in Residence Dave Armstrong and Otago University PhD student Will Catton, have won the fiction/nonfiction sections, respectively, of the Royal Society of New Zealand Manhire Prize for Creative Science Writing. Judge Bernard Beckett was taken with Dave Armstrong’s finely crafted and oblique response to the topic of evolution in his story ‘Waimate’, and with the ‘sheer exuberance’ of Will Catton’s approach to ‘Progress, Laughter, Sex’. Their cash awards of \$2500 were presented last week during the Science Honours Dinner at Te Papa by Bill Manhire and Guy Somerset from the *New Zealand Listener*. Oh, and in

case you were wondering – yes, Will Catton is indeed the brother of novelist and 2007 Adam Prize winner Eleanor Catton (see item 3, below). Bernard Beckett's complete remarks and the winning works, can be found [here](#).

#### **b. Horrocks wanders (and a job opportunity)**

Victoria creative writing graduate Ingrid Horrocks is the author of *Travelling with Augusta*, a book that's part travel memoir, part biography, part history of women's travel. She has recently been awarded a prestigious Marsden Fund research grant that will enable her to spend the next three years working on a book project, *Reluctant Wanderers*, which will ask how and why the figure of the female wanderer became so important in late eighteenth-century British literature. The project will explore appearances of this figure across a range of literary forms, from sonnet sequences to gothic novels to travel narratives. The grant will allow Ingrid to reduce her teaching load at Massey University, where she lectures in Creative Writing, and as a result a three-year [position](#) teaching life-writing has become available. We're told there may also be work for internal and extramural tutors for the first year creative writing paper. See item 3. for more on Ingrid Horrocks's upcoming activities.

#### **c. Bonjour Menton**

The [2009 New Zealand Post Mansfield Prize](#) (formerly known as the Katherine Mansfield Menton Fellowship) has been awarded to Jenny Patrick. She receives 'a sum which is intended to cover return travel to France and living and accommodation expenses, currently not less than \$100,000'. Jenny Patrick did the Original Composition course at Victoria in the same year as Emily Perkins and Chris Orsman, and has gone on to spend many months on the New Zealand fiction bestseller lists since then as the author of *The Denniston Rose*, *Heart of Coal* and *Landings*, among other books. We suspect she will have to wrest the key to the Menton apartment out of the grip of the happy incumbent, Damien Wilkins — but knowing Jenny, that shouldn't be too much of a problem.

#### **d. The new generation**

Victoria creative writing graduates Jo Randerson and Anna Sanderson were last night named recipients of two of the Arts Foundation's annual 'New Generation' Awards, designed to celebrate early achievement and to invest in the careers of each recipient. The investment, to the tune of \$25,000 each, is donated by Freemasons New Zealand. Anna Sanderson's 2005 MA thesis [brainpark](#) (VUP, 2006) is an intellectually playful essay collection that explores themes of family, faith, art history, and sanctuary. She subsequently won the 2006 Landfall Essay Competition, and was shortlisted for the 2008 Prize in Modern Letters. Also on that shortlist was [Jo Randerson](#), the author of two highly individual short-story collections (*The Spit Children* and *The Keys to Hell*) and numerous plays and comedy/theatre shows including *Fold*, *The Lead Wait*, and *Banging Cymbal*, *Clanging Gong*. The Awards are available to artists working in any discipline, and recipients are selected without them knowing that they are under consideration. The other New Generation artists honoured this year are jazz musician Jeff Henderson, singer Madeleine Pierard and experimental artist/film-maker Alex Monteith.

#### **e. Writing on the air**

2008 MA (Page) student Sylvie Haisman is one of three New Zealand writers to win a 'highly commended' award in the 2008 Commonwealth Broadcasters Association

short story competition, announced on 13 November. The others were Adrienne Frater of Nelson, and Helen Von Randow of Invercargill. Australian Jennifer Mills won the Pacific section, and the overall winner is Canadian psychiatrist Julie Curwin. Radio New Zealand National will be broadcasting the winning stories in December as part of its summer programming.

#### **f. Landfall prizes**

2005 MA (Page) graduate Alice Miller is co-winner (with Kirsten Warner) of the 2008 Landfall Essay Competition, announced on Sunday. In 'Several Small Gulls Struggle to Find Footing in NZ & Elsewhere', Alice Miller explores the emotions aroused by the word home as she looks back from Iowa (where she is a Glenn Schaeffer Fellow at the Iowa Writers' Workshop), Melbourne and elsewhere. Judge Martin Edmond commented that 'The essays I chose as joint winners have two things in common: both are tenacious in pursuit of an idea; and each pursues that idea in a rapidly unfolding cascade of speculative sentence-making that is intensely pleasurable to read.' The winners share a prize of \$2500, and their essays appear in [Landfall 216: Utopia](#), edited by another Victoria creative writing graduate, the novelist Tim Corballis, and released this week. Also announced in this issue of Landfall is the winner of the inaugural Kathleen Grattan Award for a collection of poetry. Judge Fleur Adcock chose Joanna Preston's *The Summer King*, with Victoria creative writing graduates Mary Cresswell and Rob Egan joining James Norcliffe on the runners-up list. Preston will receive \$16,000 and have her book published by UOP.

#### **g. Scripts for success (1)**

2007 MA (Script) graduates Tim Worrall and Catherine Bisley are two of the three writers whose scripts have been selected to receive development funding under the New Zealand Film Commission's 1<sup>st</sup> Writers Initiative, designed to identify new screenwriting talent and to give new writers an opportunity to workshop a script with development experts. The first draft of their scripts was completed during their MA year with Ken Duncum at the IIML.

#### **h. Scripts for success (2)**

In the recently announced shortlist for the [Chapman Tripp Theatre Awards](#), Branwen Millar is in the running for the Peter Harcourt Award for Outstanding New Playwright of the Year with *Armslength*, and Dave Armstrong's adaptation of Sia Figiel's novel *where we once belonged* is a contender for the Absolutely Positively Outstanding New New Zealand Play of the Year.

#### **i. Good teaching**

And last but by no means least, we congratulate our colleague Ken Duncum, MA (Script) convenor and teacher extraordinaire, who was voted Best Post-Graduate Supervisor in the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences at Victoria for 2008. He was treated to a bottle of wine and a meal at a Chinese restaurant by the Post-Graduate Students Association.

## **2. Got there! (The expanding bookshelf 1)**

Congratulations also to Barbara Anderson, whose autobiography, *Getting There*, will be launched at Unity Books in Wellington this Thursday, 27 November, at 6pm. A

warm invitation is extended to all who love good books and would like to join the celebrations. On TVNZ's Good Morning programme Kate De Goldi called *Getting There* 'the best writer's autobiography I've read since Janet Frame.' The book itself is a handsome hardback. A Kim Hill interview with Barbara was broadcast last Saturday, and can be downloaded from the [RNZ](#) site, while a profile by Paula Morris is in the new issue of the *NZ Listener*.

*Getting There* is described by the publishers as 'both a moving life story with which many readers, especially women, will identify, and a revealing insight into the making of a major writer.' It covers her childhood in Hawke's Bay (including the 1931 earthquake), her science degree at Otago University in the 1940s and her early experience as a teacher, her marriage to dashing young naval officer Neil Anderson, and the late blossoming of her literary career both in New Zealand and overseas, starting with the publication of her first book in 1989, at the age of 63, after she had completed the Original Composition paper at Victoria.

### **3. The (even) newer generation**

In contrast with Barbara Anderson, it would be fair to describe 2007 MA (Page) graduate Eleanor Catton as an early developer: her first novel, *The Rehearsal*, was published this year, when its author had attained the ripe old age of 23. Now *The Rehearsal* has been picked up for publication by Granta in the UK, and Little, Brown in the USA, with a second novel under contract. Both Anderson and Catton are represented in the UK by agent Caroline Dawnay, who says 'I rarely take on more than two or three new clients in a year, but *The Rehearsal* was a book that I had to represent.' Granta's publisher, Philip Gwyn Jones says, 'This is the most striking new fiction writing I've seen all year, and the way in which Eleanor exhibits a near-perfect ear and a spring-heeled buoyancy to her prose promises so, so much.' Sales prospects for foreign language rights are also looking good.

### **4. Remembering Tuwhare**

Hone Tuwhare's death at 86 earlier this year was somewhat overshadowed (in the media at least) by the death of another New Zealand icon, Sir Edmund Hillary, but tributes to this much-loved poet have since appeared in various locations, and a soon-to-be-published issue of the online journal [Ka Mate Ka Ora](#) edited by Robert Sullivan will be devoted to Hone and his legacy, with poems, photographs, a 1969 interview with Bill Manhire and many diverse appreciations from a long list of contributors including Albert Wendt, Selina Tusitala Marsh, Janet Hunt, Hana O'Regan, Glenn Colquhoun, Hinemoana Baker, David Eggleton, Cilla McQueen and others. This Sunday, 30 November, Gaylene Preston's documentary *Hone Tuwhare* will screen at the Paramount Theatre in Courtenay Place, Wellington at 4pm. The movie will be introduced by some readings of Tuwhare's poetry, and Gaylene Preston will talk about the documentary and the poet at the conclusion of the screening. All proceeds go towards the development of the New Crossways in Roxburgh Street: tickets cost \$20 (adults) and \$10 (children), e-mail [hone@mtvictoria.org.nz](mailto:hone@mtvictoria.org.nz) to book.

## 5. Your work here?

Three New Zealand literary journals are currently calling for submissions. The editors of new(ish) literary magazine on the block *Hue & Cry* are ready to consider submissions for their third issue. They publish new New Zealand fiction, poetry, essays, artist pages, artist texts, and photography, with plans to branch out into science. The deadline for submissions is Christmas 2008: for information on how to submit and where to get copies of Issue One: The Garden Party and Issue Two: Stakeout, contact [hueandcryjournal@gmail.com](mailto:hueandcryjournal@gmail.com).

Writer Paula Morris is soliciting fiction, poetry, personal essays, and other non-fiction for *Landfall* 217, which will be dedicated to work by, or about, expatriate New Zealand writers and artists. She writes: 'New Zealand isn't far-flung, but New Zealanders are: more than half a million of us live in other countries. *Landfall* 217 explores the creative work New Zealand writers and artists are producing in or about these other places, as well as the ways travelling and living elsewhere informs our work when (and if) we return home.' The deadline for submissions to 'FLUNG: The Expatriate Issue' is January 10, 2009. Send Word documents to Paula Morris [pjkmorris@gmail.com](mailto:pjkmorris@gmail.com) with LANDFALL SUBMISSION in the subject line, and relevant personal information and complete contact details in the e-mail. Other correspondence and art portfolios to: Landfall, Otago University Press, PO Box 56, Dunedin, New Zealand.

And *JAAM* 27 will be edited by Ingrid Horrocks (see item 1b, above). The theme for this issue is 'wandering'. As well as work that features literal wanderers and travellers (a mainstay of New Zealand literature), Ingrid is also interested in 'work that wanders - works that digress in creative ways from narrative, argument, or genre.' Wandering fiction, poetry, and especially, creative nonfiction, should be sent to [jaammagazine@yahoo.co.nz](mailto:jaammagazine@yahoo.co.nz) or PO Box 25239, Panama Street, Wellington 6146 by the end of March 2009. As always, this issue of *JAAM* will also be open to general submissions.

## 6. From the whiteboard

'The problem with taste is, yours is right and everyone else's is ridiculous.'

William Logan

## 7. Two New Zealand poets abroad

New Zealand and Scottish poetry have been enjoying closer relations in recent times, with the [Scottish Poetry Library](#) adopting the *Best New Zealand Poems* model for their own online anthology of Scottish writing, and featuring a growing roster of New Zealand poets on their website. We hear there are attempts being made to set up a writers' exchange between the two countries, so perhaps each will hear more of the other's accent in years to come. Relations are already getting more personal, though:

next March, Bill Manhire and Jenny Bornholdt will appear at the [StAnza poetry festival](#), which takes place every year in St Andrews. The 2009 programme marks the 250<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the birth of Robert Burns, and includes over 70 international and local poets such as Carol Ann Duffy, Simon Armitage, and the fabulously-named Elvis McGonagall. Bill Manhire is the official Poet in Residence, a role which will see him taking part in the launch event with Scotland's First Minister, conducting a public masterclass, and giving a reading with Simon Armitage, as well as taking part in a presentation on Robert Louis Stevenson. As well as the usual programme of readings, film screenings and exhibitions, the festival also pays homage to St Andrews' better-known international event with a Poetry and Golf Walk to explore 'poetic aspects of the ancient game'.

## 8. A verse in your ear

On the subject of readings, Bill Manhire writes, 'One of the pleasures of hearing poets read their work is a sense of intimacy that isn't always there on the page – we are let into secrets of tone and feeling that the page can't easily divulge. Equally, on the page poems can go far too fast: the eye speeds up and summarises. The ear, however can only hear words at the rate which the voice releases them: so when we listen to poems there is a strange kind of narrative excitement as well as music.'

Which brings us (ahem) to a small pre-Christmas advertisement for the poetry CDs Bill Manhire and Jenny Bornholdt launched at the National Library earlier this year during an event featuring New Zealand's five living poets laureate. The audio-equivalent of a 'selected poems' – or perhaps a 'greatest hits'? – the recordings are the first in a projected series featuring all the laureates. Possibly the ideal Christmas gift for poetry lovers and those yet to be converted... They're titled simply 'Jenny Bornholdt' and 'Bill Manhire', are distributed by Jayrem Records, and should be available from New Zealand's more discerning booksellers (or CD stores). Or you could email Jayrem ([jayrem.co.nz](mailto:jayrem.co.nz)) to find out your nearest stockist, or order the CDs online [here](#).

## 9. The expanding bookshelf (2)

Elizabeth Knox releases two books this month. A limited hardback edition of *The Vintner's Luck* celebrates the tenth anniversary of this breakout novel, which has sold over 50,000 copies in New Zealand and over 100,000 copies worldwide. The novel will have its debut on the big screen next year in a film by Niki Caro, in which the author and her husband appear as extras. And a new book, *The Love School*, collects more than twenty years of non-fiction. In her foreword, Knox describes the two things that started and kept her writing. 'The first is a desperate need to be someone other than myself, and a *delight* in being someone else. That's what accounts for the novels. The other thing that made me start, and made me go on, was an urge to save what I cared for, to commemorate what I loved. These essays do that.' A half-hour Radio New Zealand interview about both books, broadcast on 20 November, can be heard [here](#).

## 10. Six weeks in Devonport

The Michael King Writers' Centre is calling for applications for two short residencies at the centre in the historic Signalman's House in Devonport, Auckland, in early 2009. Each residency is for eight weeks. The writers will be able to use a bedroom at the Michael King Writers' Centre, work in the detached writer's studio and will each receive a stipend of \$8,000. The residencies are funded by the Michael King Writers' Centre and Creative New Zealand. It is expected that one residency will be between January and March/April and the second will run between April and June. The residencies are open to established authors, working on a project in fiction, non-fiction, drama or poetry. Detailed information about the 2009 short residencies, the terms and conditions, how to apply and information about centre can be viewed [here](#) or contact the administrator on 09 445 8451. Applications close on Friday 12 December 2008.

## 11. Thoroughly modern Milton

The Friends of the Turnbull Library are hosting a conference on Milton, which will open with a public lecture to commemorate the 400<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the birth of John Milton, '17th century poet, scholar, pamphleteer, tireless defender of religious, civil and domestic liberties'. The lecture, 'Reading Him Now', will be presented by John Rumrich, Thaman Professor of English at the University of Texas, Austin, at 6pm on Friday 5 December in the National Library auditorium. You could warm up for the lecture by looking in on 'Collecting Pandemonium', an exhibition in the National Library Gallery that showcases the Turnbull's extensive Milton holdings. Highlights include elaborate fine print editions of Milton's work, a collection of his radical pamphlets, lavishly illustrated versions of *Paradise Lost*, and translations of his great poem into many languages – from Swedish, Welsh, Tongan, Greek to Ancient Armenian. The exhibition opens on 2 December.

## 12. Two American poets

Readers may recall an item in a previous newsletter noting that Arda Collins, who taught an Iowa Workshop at the IIML in 2006, had been awarded the Yale Younger Poets prize by Louise Glück. Now her book, *It is Daylight*, is about to appear from Yale University Press, and is already available for pre-order on Amazon. And another visitor from the States also has a new book out. Robyn Schiff, who appeared in Writers on Mondays with her partner Nick Twemlow in 2006, has just published her second volume of poetry, *Revolver*, with the University of Iowa Press. Some sample poems by each of the poets can be found here:

[‘Silverware, by J.A. Henckels’](#)

[‘On the Abduction of Calvin Klein's Daughter Marci: A Captor's Narrative’](#)

[‘Low’](#)

[‘Garden Apartments’](#)

[‘Pool # 10’](#)

### 13. The 'new New' generation

2008 MA (Page) students Paul Dagarin, Alison Glenny, Charis Boos and 2007 graduate Joan Fleming appear alongside more established New Zealand writers and critics in a new issue of [\*Moving Worlds: A Journal of Transcultural Writings\*](#) (Vol.8, No.2), published by the University of Leeds. The editors of 'New New Zealand', Mark Williams and Stuart Murray, say that the issue 'seeks to reflect recent trends in New Zealand literary and critical practice, in particular what we observe as a sense of detachment from traditional nationalistic imperatives.' It includes essays on cultural nationalism, *bro'Town*, George Grey, Witi Ihimaera's fiction, Vincent Ward's *River Queen* and Patricia Grace's *Dogside Story*, as well as fiction by Sara Knox and Carl Shuker, and poetry by Anna Jackson, Geoff Cochrane, Robert Sullivan and Gregory O'Brien.

### 14. Recent web reading

[Whitireia writing online](#)

[Libraries as "idea stores"](#)

[Top ten irritating phrases](#)

<http://thegoldennotebook.org/>

### 15. Great lists of our time

A number of numbers, from 'divisibility-based sets of integers' on [Wikipedia](#).

Prime number  
Composite number  
Powerful number  
Square-free number  
Achilles number  
Perfect number  
Almost perfect number  
Quasiperfect number  
Multiply perfect number  
Hyperperfect number  
Superperfect number  
Unitary perfect number  
Semiperfect number  
Primitive semiperfect number  
Practical number  
Abundant number  
Highly abundant number



Superabundant number  
Colossally abundant number  
Highly composite number  
Superior highly composite number  
Deficient number  
Weird number  
Amicable number  
Friendly number  
Sociable number  
Solitary number  
Sublime number  
Harmonic divisor number  
Frugal number  
Equidigital number  
Extravagant number

\* \* \*

### **Supporting the IIML**

The International Institute of Modern Letters was established at Victoria University in 2001 to promote and foster contemporary imaginative writing.

Our founder, philanthropist Glenn Schaeffer, continues to contribute to IIML activities, including his assistance for an annual fellowship exchange programme with the Iowa Writers' Workshop.

While not everyone is able to match Glenn's level of support, we value all those who have helped us to foster the development of emerging writers. We would welcome the opportunity to talk with you about continuing your support for the IIML, for example through a gift in your will.

All gifts are managed by the Victoria University Foundation, a registered charitable trust established to raise funds in areas of strategic importance to the University, such as the IIML.

For further information on how you can provide philanthropic support to the IIML, please contact our Director, Bill Manhire, Ph: 04 463 6808, Email: [bill.manhire@vuw.ac.nz](mailto:bill.manhire@vuw.ac.nz), or Diana Meads, Fundraising Manager, Victoria University of Wellington Foundation Ph: 0800 VIC LEGACY (0800 842 534), Email: [diana.meads@vuw.ac.nz](mailto:diana.meads@vuw.ac.nz)